Tyranny and Tragedy: Paradigms of Surveillance in Theodor Storm's *Aquis submersus* and *Carsten Curator*

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Tyranny and Tragedy: Paradigms of Surveillance in Theodor Storm's *Aquis submersus* and *Carsten Curator*

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Theodor Storm's *Novellen Aquis submersus* (1876) and *Carsten Curator* (1878) stand out from other nineteenth-century representations of surveillance because of their intensity. Surveillance dominates the relationships between the principal characters, provides the driving force in the narrative action, and constitutes an essential mode of metaphorical expression. *Aquis submersus* documents an abuse of power: surveillance, in the control of correspondence and the use of informants, is the tool of a corrupt and petty aristocracy. Here, surveillance is depicted as a perverse evil, a transgression of natural justice that stands in the way of love. The text's ending modifies this critique, however: Katharina's child drowns as the lovers embrace, a fact that is interpreted and recorded in a painting as paternal negligence, making surveillance a moral duty that impedes the freedom of the observer as well as the observed. *Carsten Curator* explores surveillance failures in different ways. Carsten's identity derives from guardianship, and it is his son's forays outside the paternal field of vision that lead eventually to Heinrich's death. Yet Carsten's morality of surveillance is exposed as ideological and emotional self-control: a picture of Carsten's father and Heinrich's resemblance to his mother determine Carsten's actions, functioning as absent observers whose imaginary surveillance Carsten both fears and craves.

Keywords: *Theodor Storm,* Aquis submersus, Carsten Curator, nineteenth-century German narrative, surveillance, visuality, observer, morality

I.

Looking at nineteenth-century Realist literature through the lens of "surveillance" is both productive and problematic—and interesting for both reasons. It is productive, because our modern sense of the relationship between surveillance as an act and as a moral question for society seems to offer new connections with nineteenth-century literature, a literature that is concerned in part with exploring notions of individual freedom and social control through a poetics focused on the apprehension, interpretation, and representation of reality. Not least, we are concerned with authors, like Theodor Fontane and Theodor Storm, who certainly knew censorship and political oppression first hand. It is problematical precisely because tracing these parallel concerns seems to risk eroding our

scholarly sense of difference and distance. Even if we use, as the editors of the recent special volume of *German Studies Review* suggest, a broad definition of surveillance (Wiesen and Zimmerman 264), we need to be mindful about seeking to interpret nineteenth-century literature through a concept that has been seen as not only a defining feature of modernity but more specifically of contemporary societies and their development in the wake of the September 11th bombings in America (Ball and Webster). This is most obviously problematic given that the rise in scholarly and media interest about surveillance is in large measure the result of increased surveillance activity and possibilities that have come about as a result of developments in technology. "Surveillance" appears to be defined by and is of interest to us because of both technological processes and political and ethical questions that are specific to our age. An initial review of reference works gives us some insight into the scope of the topic but also the duality of surveillance as a problem that balances technical possibilities with moral questions. The short entry in the *Brockhaus* distinguishes thus between entries on "Recht" and "Technik." Similarly, an *Encyclopedia of Applied Ethics* refers surveillance both to a chapter on "Electronic Surveillance" and one on "Privacy and Surveillance" (Chadwick II: 29–38; III: 657–58). The *New Oxford Companion to the Law* highlights the inadequacy of previous legislative frameworks for coping with new technologies that do not require, say, the placing of bugging devices on site. Here again, privacy is noted as a particularly contemporary legal problem, with new legislation needing to cover "directed surveillance" activities and "covert human intelligence sources" (informers) (Cane, see entry "Surreptitious Surveillance"). In all these examples, it is the particularity of new political challenges and technological possibilities that raises ethical and legal issues that are felt to be especially new, distinctive, and contemporary.

Of course, even if recent developments have given surveillance added urgency as a focus for critical commentary, there is nothing inherently new about keeping watch on suspicious or potentially threatening members of society; indeed, Kurtz and Turpin's *Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict* situates surveillance within Western society's evolving cultures of control, seeing its roots in nineteenth-century social history, notably the creation of police forces as a means of political control (Kurtz and Turpin III: 308–09). Foucault's *Surveiller et punir* is the most well-known study in this vein. Perhaps more significant for our purposes, however, are the broad definitions that "surveillance studies" gives itself, from the still relatively specific "Surveillance involves the observation, recording and categorization of information about people, processes and institutions" to "Surveillance is about seeing things and, more particularly, about seeing people" to "This book is about watching people" (Ball and Webster 1; Lyon 1; Norris 1). Tellingly, David Lyon's book *Surveillance Studies: An Overview* is divided into three parts—viewpoints, vision, and visibility—anchoring modern concerns about the kinds of activities that technological possibilities offer and political imperatives demand in far broader discussions about who sees, where, and with what consequence. As much as surveillance itself, then,

it is in a sense through surveillance that "visuality has become a social, economic, and political issue" (Ball and Webster 2). This has important methodological implications for this study, for as we shall see, it is precisely this need to understand negative and oppressive surveillance practices within broader patterns of visual behaviour that characterizes Theodor Storm's literary explorations of surveillance.

The purpose of this essay is to consider two *Novellen* by Storm from the point of view of surveillance, *Aquis submersus* (1876) and *Carsten Curator* (1878). In the nineteenth century, literary representations of events and actions one can term surveillance are prevalent, whether that is the border control of documents in Heine's *Deutschland, ein Wintermärchen*, which gives an insight into the nineteenth-century realities of invasive policing and censorship or whether that is the troubling narrative about Meretlein, the abused child in Keller's *Der grüne Heinrich*, a case that raises issues about duty of care and neglect. What makes these *Novellen* by Storm interesting and rewarding to read as explorations of surveillance is the multidimensional nature of Storm's exploration of the kinds of problems that surveillance poses. On one level, in *Aquis submersus*, there is a recognizable narrative of surveillance as the tyrannical abuse of power; in *Carsten Curator*, surveillance is part of a tyranny of reputation. In both narratives, however, these representations of acts of surveillance, which are social or political in nature, are embedded in more elaborate and ambiguous discourses: of observation and visual communication, of artistic interpretation and documentation, and of guardianship and moral watchfulness. Significantly, these practices of surveillance are not dissociable. Watchfulness, paternalistic care, the artistic recording, and interpretation of the world and individuals are inherently human activities, and all are moral imperatives. At the same time, these practices of surveillance not only include the possibility of producing situations of oppression; they also often fail to ensure positive outcomes such as the protection of loved ones. In this sense, surveillance is, in these narratives, an essential human characteristic, but it is precisely that quality that means that practices of surveillance in a positive vein both inevitably fail and are inevitably abused, working thus as expressions of the tragic "*Unzulänglichkeit* des Menschentums" (Storm, *Theodor Storm-Erich Schmidt*, II: 49).

II.

In a straightforward sense, *Aquis submersus* narrates a tale about surveillance. Johannes, a young man who receives patronage from a local nobleman, Gerhardus, trains to become a painter. Returning from his training in Holland, he finds his protector has died. He falls in love with the daughter, Katharina, but is unable to marry her partly because of his own social standing, partly because her violent brother, Wulf, wishes her to marry an equally violent aristocratic neighbour, von der Risch. Johannes is, however, commissioned to paint Katharina so that, in accordance with tradition, an image of her will remain in the house once she is

married. The situation is tense and marked by violence. One night, after having delivered a request for help on behalf of Katharina behind Wulf's back, Johannes is attacked by Wulf and Risch; Johannes escapes his pursuers, and he and Katharina spend the night together. The following day, Wulf shoots Johannes and, while Johannes is unconscious and recovering, has Katharina taken away and subsequently married to a minister. At the end of the narrative, the two lovers meet again when Johannes is contracted to paint a portrait of Katharina's husband. When the two finally meet again, their child is playing near some water. Despite Katharina's warning "es könnte ihm ein Leids geschehen" (II: 696), she and Johannes embrace, and in that moment of distraction, the child drowns. Johannes paints an image of his son, adds the initials "CPAS" (*culpa patris aquis submersus*), confessing and recording his own guilt for the child's death, and it is to this negligence that the *Novelle*'s title, and the discussion of the painting in the frame narrative, refer.

It is significant, however, that, while the frame narrative establishes the puzzle of the painting and makes the personal failure of surveillance the telos of the narrative, the first and larger part of the text focuses instead on a story of surveillance at a political and social level—surveillance as a mark of tyranny. It becomes evident that Wulf and Risch can rely on a network of informants to intercept messages, to follow Johannes and Katharina, and to track down Johannes on the basis of material clues. This is most obvious in the interception of the messages Katharina tries to send to ask for help. At an early stage, Katharina discloses to Johannes that one message to her aunt at the Preetz *Stift* has already fallen into her brother's hands. Johannes agrees to take another message while on his way to Hamburg for the frame for Katharina's portrait, which he does, but he is followed and seen. And if this can be interpreted as the result of "unhappy chance" within the *Novelle*'s preparation of a tragic outcome (Mullan 236), the frequency and nature of Johannes's encounters points to Storm's conflation of tragic motivation and the representation of tyranny. First, Johannes is attacked early on his journey by one of Wulf's violent dogs. Then, when he returns to the village and meets Wulf and Risch, it is revealed that Risch's men had seen him in Preetz. This leads to a violent confrontation, and Johannes is attacked by Risch and Wulf and only escapes the violent dogs with difficulty, climbing a tree and eventually finding shelter with Katharina. The dogs following Johannes's scent trail ("sie hielten fest auf meine Spur" II: 665) are mirrored in other acts of evidence gathering and pursuit. Although Johannes does escape, this is only temporary, as the following morning he is given away by a clue he left behind: a piece of material from his coat on the ivy leading up to Katharina's room, which Katharina's old nurse, *Bas Ursel*, finds and gives to Wulf. This in turn leads to Wulf sending men out to look for Johannes, "Ich hab Euch suchen lassen" (674), again leading to a violent confrontation, this time with Johannes being shot by Wulf. In other words, Wulf is not only portrayed as a violent individual but as a local lord who abuses his ability to use violence without fear of the courts, combined with a network of loyal informants, as a means of

establishing unlimited control. A primary way Storm articulates a criticism of the system, which gives Wulf this freedom, is through a clear narrative of aggressive surveillance tactics.

However, these acts of surveillance make sense in the text only as the abuse of powers of a paternalistic lord, powers that are positively valued and represented elsewhere in the text in images that recall Wulf's behaviour. Thus, imagining his protector, Wulf's father, Gerhardus, to be still alive when he is making his way back from his studies in Holland, Johannes recalls at the beginning of the narrative:

> Meine Gedanken aber eilten mir voraus; immer sah ich Herrn Gerhardus, meinen edlen großgünstigen Protector, wie er von der Schwelle seines Zimmers mir die Hände würd' entgegenstrecken, mit seinem milden Gruße: "So segne Gott deinen Eingang, mein Johannes!" (II: 636)

Here, Johannes imagines indeed that a protective figure, Gerhardus, is watching him on his journey; his outstretched arms invite Johannes back into a protected, controlled environment, and God's blessing is sought, God who is thus similarly imagined looking down as the ultimate protector in heaven. Johannes benefits from the personal sense of possession that exists between him and his protector, someone he imagines visually, and who, in the frame narrative has already been introduced allusively through a portrait as an observer, an "ernst und milde blickender Mann" (II: 635). Furthermore, before Johannes left, Gerhardus had been able show him his journey on a map, demonstrating a sense of knowledge about his movements. At this early stage of the narrative then, it appears that in fact what is problematic is not the paternalistic system, nor is it the notion that a lord might be able to watch over an individual and trace his movements, but rather that this power has been abused.

Certainly, much of the internal narrative, recounted by Johannes in later years, gives this impression and sees the world dominated by Wulf essentially as the inversion of an earlier golden age. On the way back from Holland, Johannes recalls a moment from their childhood; this episode subsequently serves as a source of symbolic reference for Johannes in his interpretation of later events. Katharina wishes to show him a bird's nest. The nest, however is threatened by a buzzard. At that stage, Johannes is able to act and defeat the buzzard; similarly, he is able to stand up to Junker Kurt, "sein alter Widersacher" (II: 640), who, with a crooked nose, resembles a bird. Indeed, as a young child, Katharina calls him "Buhz" to Johannes, and they hide from him (II: 639). Returning from his years in Amsterdam, however, Johannes speaks to the loyal servant Dieterich and discovers not only that Herr Gerhardus is dead, but that times are bad more generally (II: 643). This is in part the product of external factors: the war with Sweden has brought violence and need into the country, which makes the need for good leadership all the more pressing, as Johannes observes with unknowing irony: "aus mancher Fensterhöhlung schaut statt des Bauers itzt der Wolf heraus;

hab dergleichen auch gesehn; aber es ist ja Frieden worden, und der gute Herr im Schloß wird helfen, seine Hand ist offen" (II: 643) Wulf's assumption of his rights appears thus as part of a general decadence, the turning of a whole world. More importantly, from the point of view of surveillance, that decadence and inversion is first felt by Johannes in the context of an intercepted letter. Johannes had sent a letter from Hamburg telling Gerhardus of his arrival. As Dieterich informs Johannes, however, his letter "ist zwar richtig mit der Königlichen Post von Hamburg kommen; aber den rechten Leser hat es nicht mehr finden können," implying that Wulf has read his letter.

Most obviously and consistently, Johannes's narrative establishes clearly the associations between Wulf and a predatory animal, making Johannes and Katharina the prey, contrasting with the earlier childhood world in which they had been able to keep such forces at bay, and indeed in which they occupied a benevolent position as the protectors and observers of nature. In other words, in Johannes's retelling of his story, he differentiates between a period of good and protective observers (his childhood) and a period of violent and predatory observers (the present). However, as we have noted, the predators were already there in the childhood idyll. This is important because the story tends to suggest that Wulf is simply an abusive and violent person, but in fact, it is both his lack of humanity and the system that gives such a person power that are at fault. The potential for abuse of power was always latent—and indeed such abuse is bound to happen. In short, at a political and social level, the narrative tells a story based on the abuse of power in the form of violence and control; surveillance plays a part, not only as significant for the action, but also as a way of tracing a change in values. However, it is not in fact the act of surveillance itself that is criticized. It is the association of surveillance with predatory violence and the subsequent loss of paternalistic models of social order based precisely on watching and care that is the object of the *Novelle*'s critique.

Significantly, these political reflections on surveillance occur within a broader exploration of observation as a pattern of behaviour. In this respect, the framing narrative is important. It is in the framing narrative that the portrait is discovered and the puzzle of the inscription on the portrait is announced. Before the portrait is discovered, however, the narrator describes, like Johannes, scenes of his childhood spent in the natural world. Here, the boys regularly watch, "mit dem den Buben angeborenen Instinkte" (II: 629), the nests of birds to see whether the eggs have hatched; they observe wasps flying back and forth to their nest "in beschaulicher Mittagsstunde" (II: 630). For Robert Holub, these descriptions essentially serve to create what Barthes terms *l'effet de réel* (Barthes 1968); these details have no "future symbolic value" as such; rather they function within a range of strategies of authentication (Holub 1985, 121). However, what is at issue is less the objects than the act of observation. Observation is presented at the *Novelle*'s beginning here as a normal practice in life, something that is related to interest and instinct—the boys are interested in what they are looking at, it is their instinct to look at these elements of nature. Furthermore, the narrator

goes beyond the simple representation of looking and associates these acts of observation with study, with detailed, analytical observation. The narrator is occupied in these childhood observations with the son of the pastor, in the area around the pastor's house, of which the most prominent feature, the "Studierzimmer [...] mit seinen kleinen blinden Fensterscheiben auf die bekannten Gäste hinabgrüßte" (II: 629). The initial presentation of how the boys look at all the wonderful things in the church where the portrait is contained is similarly described as "Studien" (II: 632). Man is presented here as an observer, a reader, a namer of nature; moreover, it is this desire to observe, to study, and to explain that motivates the narrator to find out about the painting, which thus motivates the narrative as a whole.

The novel's exploration of observation as significant human behaviour takes a different turn in the outset of the internal narrative. Here, it is visual communication, the engagement with human beings through sight that gains prominence: Katharina and Johannes communicate visually, reading each other's gazes. We may note among many examples: "Katharina schwieg, aus ihren Augen aber [flog] ein flehentlicher Blick mir zu. [...]" (II: 646). The effects of this are many. First, this is a variation on the childhood memory that contrasts loving and caring watchfulness with predatory interest, as the violent mood of Risch and Wulf is also made evident in their eyes (II: 655). Second, there is, in a sense, the presentation of this mode of communication as natural: Katharina and Johannes do not need to articulate their feelings. As the above quotation shows, silent, visual communication is valued over speech in Johannes's narration. There is a parallel to be made here too between this more or less silent visuality and the evocation of God as the ultimate paternalistic figure in the narrative: when Dieterich observes, "das weiß nur unser Herrgott" (II: 674), he implies that, since God is all knowing but simultaneously that his knowledge is for him alone, there is no way for us to enter into a conversation with him. Within this framework, thus, there is a slightly ambiguous interplay between openness and concealment. On the one hand, it is obviously part of the charm, and the naivety, of the love between Johannes and Katharina that it is both unstated and something that develops in private. On the other, the novel charts a progression towards increasing coveredness: just before Johannes agrees to be Katharina's secret messenger, her sadness is demonstrated as "ein Schleier über ihre braunen Augensterne [zog]" (II: 653). There is a palpable shift in the narrative towards metaphors of closedness and secrecy.

This is significant for the discourse on surveillance because visual contact—watching, seeing one another—is presented as the primary means of meaningful human engagement, whether that is antagonistic (with Wulf) or positive (with Gerhardus or Katharina). What Storm's text suggests then, is that there is no way out of "surveillance" in the sense of being watched or, indeed, in the sense of watching others. Surveillance defines the way human beings act in a general sense (as observers); it defines the way they interact with their world, how they create, foster, and trace the development of their relationships. Indeed, the

narrative appears to go further: veils and secrets are negatively valued here—openness is the necessary prerequisite for visual communication.

Before we go on to discuss the second part of the narrative, it is necessary to consider the representations of art with reference to the discourses on surveillance and observation that have so far been the objects of our discussion. In the *Novelle*, visual art plays a significant role both as the source of the internal narrative (the discovery of the paintings in the frame narrative); as the final product of the narrated action (the painting of the boy); as an event that brings together different groups of characters and around which tensions and conflicts thus arise (the painting of Katharina); and as a marker of narrative progression (the progress of Katharina's portrait, the portraits in Amsterdam). The visual forms of communication and contact that mark the relationships between the characters, and the politics of observation and surveillance that we have already explored, occur thus within narrative situations and referential structures that, because they are based on visual art, create a reflexive and symbolic intensity in the *Novelle*. Certainly, the portraits in the Gerhardus family home almost seem to be alive and look down on Johannes and Katharina in a way that they perceive as menacing (II: 658); this can be contrasted with the portrait of Herrn Gerhardus in the frame narrative, in which he is "ernst und milde blickend," establishing watchfulness as a serious duty and act of kindness.

More particularly, however, art emerges as relevant to surveillance as a form of documentation. If most of the acts of surveillance that occur in the narrative are essentially confined by the need to observe human beings, either finding material evidence or following a person, then art seems to represent a different kind of surveillance here: the storing of personal information, indeed the most personal information possible, information on a person's character, a person's genetic heritage. In a well-known and often cited passage, Johannes observes, when he is painting Katharina, that, while she seems to bear a resemblance to her father and mother; Wulf's physical characteristics, and by extension his mean and aggressive character, seem to come from elsewhere:

> Das mußte tiefer aus der Vergangenheit heraufgekommen sein! Langsam ging ich die Reih der älteren Bilder entlang, bis über hundert Jahre weit hinab. Und siehe, da hing im schwarzen, von den Würmern schon zerfressenen Holzrahmen ein Bild, vor dem ich schon als Knabe, als ob's mich hielte, still gestanden war. Es stellete eine Edelfrau von etwa vierzig Jahren vor; die kleinen Augen sahen kalt und stechend aus dem harten Antlitz [...] "Hier, diese ist's! Wie räthselhafte Wege gehet die Natur! Ein saeculum und drüber rinnt es wie unter einer Decke im Blute der Geschlechter fort; dann längst vergessen, taucht es plötzlich wieder auf, den Lebenden zum Unheil. Nicht vor dem Sohn des edlen Gerhardus; vor dieser hier und ihres Blutes nachgeborenen Sprößling soll ich Katharinen schützen." (II: 651f.)

Art serves here thus as a catalogue, a repository of character portraits that explain potential behaviour and can be used to justify certain actions: Johannes,

observing that he is not really seeking to act in a way contrary to the real heir of noble Gerhardus, will allow himself to intervene against Wulf on the basis that Wulf represents a predictable, but nevertheless unrepresentative, dip in the genetic profile of this aristocratic family. This is clearly related to, but distinct from, the way that portraiture has more typically been seen in the *Novelle* as fulfilling a "commemorative" function, associated with the poetics of memory (see Dysart; Holub; Nuber). From the perspective of surveillance, at this stage in the narrative at least, art seems to work in two ways: on the one hand, it appears to be an operative part of a culture of surveillance and, in a way that is perhaps slightly disturbing from a modern perspective, involves the interpretation and storing of character information in the form of a portrait. On the other, however, it is clear that because these portraits are commissioned by the family for the family, these portraits do not form part of an operation of surveillance in the same way as Wulf and Risch's informants. Rather the family document—and inform upon—themselves. Portraiture involves creating a legacy that will be seen and interpreted by subsequent generations: it is a visual gesture of power and responsibility and works thus within the paternalistic system of observation and guardianship. Once again, aggressive and abusive surveillance of the kind to which Johannes is subjected emerges as part of much broader social practices, which are exposed as both typical of all human beings, but, as portraiture perhaps exemplifies, one that money, power, and prestige may exaggerate.

In thinking about the portraits, our attention turns to the end of the narrative, to Johannes's rediscovery of Katharina and the child while on a commission to paint her husband, the subsequent death of the child, and Johannes's recording of his own guilt in the final painting. As we noted at the beginning of our analysis, this act appears, from the perspective of the narrative action, to involve yet another inversion of circumstances. While Johannes had been the object of surveillance, in the second part of the narrative, it is his failure to act as a surveillant and his distracting of Katharina that allows the child to drown. The question of guilt in the *Novelle* has been a major source of discussion (for a summary, see Mullan), but it seems clear that Johannes does ultimately bear responsibility for his actions, as he declares: "Nicht aus der Tiefe schreckbarer Vergangenheit ist es heraufgekommen; nicht anderes ist da als deines Vaters Schuld; sie hat uns alle in die schwarze Fluth hinabgerissen" (II: 702).

There is a tension between the simplicity, the moral strictness of Johannes's statement, and the kinds of complexities that the text reveals at work in how events and emotional connections lead to the text's tragic outcome. In a certain sense, Johannes's exclamation is more important as a marker of maturity, a realization about and the setting of moral limitations on oneself: in spite of the potential blame that, say, the past might have for current events, in the simplest analysis, human beings have the capacity and the duty to assume moral responsibilities, however uncomfortable they may be. Surveillance requires this kind of maturity that it should not be abused, as is the case with Wulf, but Johannes too is shown to lack maturity: both Wulf and Johannes are after all young people in

the main part of the narrative, their desire to fulfil adult roles contrasts with their immature sparring that recalls the playground (see II: 646, for example), and their rivalry too is the product of their more distant youth. At the same time, surveillance emerges as a necessity, as the product of mature awareness of the needs of others and as a watchfulness that brings with it limitations of our own freedoms. Surveillance becomes a touchstone for the assumption of human responsibility.

And it is in this sense that the reworking of a number of motifs around the topic of surveillance from the first part of the *Novelle* are revealing. When they meet again, Katharina will not look at Johannes at first, and it is only because she is looking at the ground that Johannes is able to watch her undisturbed (II: 695). This corresponds to his general willing blindness: as he approaches the village, he does not want *to see*, to know whether the priest is on the way to town (II: 693). This willing blindness in pursuit of personal ambition is extended by Johannes to a general remark on human fate: "Wir sehen nicht, wie seine Wege führen!" (II: 694). The language and actions of Johannes and Katharina's meeting recall earlier scenes, but this time, Johannes adopts attitudes and behaviours more characteristic of Wulf or Risch. Where Katharina still looks "flehend" at Johannes, he is dominated by a "wilde Gedankenjagd," which leads to the relative violence of their final embrace (II: 696f.). In short, the visual communication between Johannes and Katharina breaks down, and instead metaphors about vision in the latter part of the narrative focus on the blindness of human beings.

The most striking reversal is the figure of the priest himself. Seemingly aggressive, a former soldier, and as Katharina's husband Johannes's natural "Widersacher," the priest may at first appear to be yet another controlling and violent abuser of power—he locks up his wife, notably, at the end of the narrative. However, the priest is by no means a simple figure: as a real person in the narrative's world, he is complex, and as the narrative progresses, we as readers see his sternness tempered by his love for the child, evident grief at his death, and subsequent anger. Indeed, the priest is more closely aligned with Gerhardus than with Wulf. Like Johannes's imagined image of Gerhardus awaiting him at his study, so the priest awaits Johannes every time he arrives at the parsonage. He is of course watching Johannes to protect his family from him, seeing Johannes this time as the predatory figure. What is more, the priest, through his warning "betet und wachet" (II: 687), points to a moral watchfulness that, though it appears inflexible and inhumane, is ultimately less dangerous and problematical than Johannes's uncontrolled and immoral observation of Katharina as a married woman, and in the end Johannes can be seen to adopt the pastor's values (Holub, 136). This is important because otherwise we might be tempted to see an overly simplistic connection between the surveillance activities at the beginning of the narrative and the priest's tendencies to control at the end, to see, by extension, religion here as a means of surveillance and curtailment of individual freedom. Undoubtedly, there are similarities, but in the end, these are not clear cut: while human beings may themselves long for freedom from invasive and controlling surveillance, this proves difficult,

not least because surveillance, in one form or another, constitutes a major part of human life; more importantly, surveillance as a duty can involve the loss of freedom on the part of the surveillant.

III.

Having thus established some of the ways in which Storm thematizes surveillance in *Aquis submersus*, let us now turn to consider briefly another text that explores issues of surveillance through the specific problematic of guardianship and paternal care, *Carsten Curator*. There are good reasons to read these two *Novellen* together. First, the closeness of the texts' genesis makes them productive objects of comparison: Storm had completed the *Aquis submersus* manuscript in April 1876 for October publication; after having received an inquiry about his next work from his publisher Westermann, Storm began work on *Carsten Curator* in the spring of 1877 and sent off his manuscript in August of that year (II: 774f.; III: 694f.). Like *Aquis submersus, Carsten Curator* focuses on a father-son relationship or what Malte Stein calls an "intergenerationelle Vereinnahmungsstruktur" (Stein, 19) that ends in the catastrophic death of the son, a death that seems, in part at least, to turn around the question of the father's guilt; though the question of paternal guilt is a common theme in Storm, the particular closeness of *Carsten Curator* and *Aquis submersus* has already led Peter Goldammer to suggest that the title and motif of the previous *Novelle* "*culpa patris aquis submersus*" could have just as easily be given to *Carsten* (Goldammer, 2000, throughout, especially 147). For, though it is less obvious than in *Aquis submersus*, here too, the son is lost from sight and drowns while the father turns to his own concerns, indeed to his love and the young man's mother. And, as we shall see later, here too the early stages of that love are explored through metaphors of vision and visuality. Here, too, surveillance as care brings with it dangers of control. This thematic closeness is perhaps surprising given the outwardly very distinct forms of the two works, *Aquis submersus* being a *Chroniknovelle* and *Carsten Curator*, a "bürgerliche Tragödie" in prose (Laage 60), a *Novelle* far closer in style and form to Storm's later works such as *Der Schimmelreiter* or *Hans und Heinz Kirch*. In exploring surveillance in *Carsten Curator*, we open potential avenues of inquiry for these later works. Nevertheless, *Carsten Curator* is worthy of particular attention, partly because of its perceived place within Storm's oeuvre: though undoubtedly one of his greatest works, Storm's *Carsten Curator* has received relatively little scholarly attention, certainly considerably less than *Aquis submersus*. David Jackson is surely right when he points to the dominance of biographical questions as the likely cause of this neglect (Jackson 43).

As in *Aquis submersus*, surveillance is most obviously present in two different forms in *Carsten Curator*, one being individual guardianship or watchfulness as a parent and the other being social practices of surveillance. The narrative relates the troubled relationship of Carsten Carstens, owner of a wool shop and financial trustee in a small Frisian town, with his son, Heinrich. Carsten's

primary goal for most of the narrative is to assure a secure position and future for his son. Indeed, life is portrayed in the text as the pursuit of security. While Carsten has managed to build a reputation and portfolio of financial assets based on careful investment, Heinrich has a tendency to speculation, to gambling, to irresponsibility and wild schemes. He thus loses his first apprenticeship position with the local Senator and a second position in Hamburg. A third attempt at a stable life, this time closer to home with a shop and married to Carsten's charge, Anna, also eventually fails as Heinrich's weak character and workshy ways get the better of him. In the *Novelle*'s dramatic close, Heinrich visits his father on a stormy night when the town is flooded, to beg him to release Anna's funds, of which Carsten is the financial guardian. Carsten refuses; Heinrich leaves and, in one last gamble, takes a boat on a risky path and is swept out to sea.

What this brief recapitulation of events does not reveal is the extent to which the final catastrophe turns around the question of visuality. For here, as in the final part of *Aquis submersus*, it is the difficulty of seeing that is crucial. Having been denied money by his father, Heinrich leaves and takes a boat out of the relatively protected area of the streets to make his way home, despite the warnings from two townspeople, and disappears from view:

> "Muß gehen!" kam es noch einmal halb verweht zurück; dann schoß das Boot in den wüsten Wasserschwall hinaus. Noch einen Augenblick sahen sie es wie einen Schatten von den Wellen auf und ab geworfen; als es über der Schleuse in die Häuserlücke gelankte, wurde es vom Strom verfaßt. Die Leute stießen einen Schrei aus; das Boot war jählings ihrem Blick verschwunden. (III: 68)

Once Carsten has been warned, it is the fact that he cannot see Heinrich, the doubt about his fate, that is frightening; in the final moment, we readers and the secondary characters only see Carsten's reaction to what we assume must have been the sight of the son's death, making man's blindness both the object of the narrative and a constituent mode of narrative presentation:

> Eine blendende Mondhelle brach durch die vorüberjagenden Wolken und beleuchtete das geisterbleiche Gesicht des Greises, der sein fliegendes Haar mit beiden Händen hielt, während die großen Augen angstvoll über die schäumende Wasserwüste schweiften.
>
> Plötzlich zuckte er zusammen. [...]
>
> "Ja, so," setzte der [Bäcker] hinzu, als er nun auch einen Blick durch die Luke tat; "der Pfahl ist, bei meiner armen Seele, leer! Aber was zum Henker ging denn das den Alten an!" (III: 71)

This final catastrophic loss of visual contact, which reflects Katharina's and Johannes's breakdown of visual communication, had been prepared by the father and son's final meeting. In the noise of the storm, Heinrich and Carsten have

difficulty hearing one another; in the dark room lit only by candlelight, Heinrich cannot see the father's face (III: 66), while Carsten is for a while unaware his son is drunk until he holds a candle to his face (III: 67). It is in this atmosphere that Carsten's final gesture to his son goes unheeded, and Carsten turns his back on his son, returning to thoughts of his wife and her death (III: 67).

However, it is not only at the ending but throughout the text that Carsten's preoccupations with his son are presented as a concern to watch over him. A good example of this occurs as Heinrich has failed to come back home at Christmas, and Carsten becomes distraught with worry:

> Auch die Weihnachtsfeiertage verflossen, ohne daß Heinrich selber oder ein Lebenszeichen von ihm *erschienen wäre*. Als auch der Neujahrsabend herankam und die langerwartete Poststunde wieder so vorüberging, hatten in dem alten Manne die Sorgen der letzten Tage sich zu einer fast erstickenden Angst gesteigert. Was konnte geschehen sein? Wenn Heinrich krank läge dort in der großen fremden Stadt! Die diesmal ruhigere Überlegung der Frauen vermochte ihn nicht zurückzuhalten, *er mußte selber hin und sehen*. Vergebens stellten sie ihm die Beschwerlichkeit *der langen Reise bei dem eingetretenen Frost vor Augen*; er suchte sich das nötige Reisegeld zusammen und hieß Brigitte seinen Koffer packen; dann ging er in die Stadt, um sich zum anderen Morgen Fuhrwerk zu verschaffen. (III: 36, my italics)

Similarly, we note Carsten's considerations about setting up Heinrich closer to home:

> Hier am Orte konnte der Vater selbst ein Auge darauf [auf das Geschäft] halten, und Heinrich würde allmählich auf sich selber stehen lernen. (III: 47)

As we note from these examples, Carsten's concern for his child is not only expressed with recourse to metaphors of looking but also informs a spatial framework in which the home, or a close place, is perceived as a realm of relative safety because an individual can be observed and watched over. Within the spatial framework of the text, the town appears, as a safe haven, to be opposed to the sea, and this dichotomy is expressive of Carsten's, and man's, battle against nature and fate in a broad sense, a recurrent theme of Storm's fiction from *Auf dem Staatshof* to *Der Schimmelreiter*. Carsten is fighting to secure Heinrich a place in bourgeois society despite the obvious evidence that he takes after his mother, who died in childbirth, the frivolous Juliane. The text conflates the spatial dichotomies—near/far, in/out, sea/town, home/world—with a topography based on the limitations of human sensory perception. In an extended and more systematic way than in *Aquis submersus*, thus, community, family, and *Geborgenheit* exist within the range of human contact, within the range of potential surveillance.

Certainly, the way in which this discourse of paternal observance relates to surveillance in a narrower, more oppressive sense is less clear than in *Aquis submersus*. There, we noted parallels between individual and social practice that are

less present in *Carsten Curator*. Nevertheless, it is important to place Carsten's parental desire to keep Heinrich safe, to watch over him, and thus to keep him close within the broader exploration of the relationship between security and control that the text establishes. We note, for example, the parallels between Carsten's personal dilemma and the political historical setting: Carsten's problems begin, in fact, during the Napoleonic *Kontinentalsperre*, when the town was full of French and Danish officers keeping out English traders. In his recollection of an Easter Sunday dance, Carsten recalls the officers' behaviour towards his wife, her actions, and his own reactions in a way that distinguishes between evil desire and his own distanced and weak, but justified, watching:

> Wie anders tanzte sie mit diesen Menschen. Ihre Augen leuchteten vor Lust; sie ging von Hand zu Hand. [...] Wenn ich je zuweilen in den Saal hineinguckte, immer war sie mit ihm am Tanzen. Als es gegen drei Uhr und der Saal schon halb geleert war, stand sie neben ihm am Schenktisch, beide mit einem vollen Glas Champagner in der Hand. Ich sah, wie sie rasch atmete und wie seine Worte, die ich nicht verstehen konnte, einmal über das andere ein fliegendes Rot über ihr blasses Gesicht jagten; sie selber sagte nichts, sie stand stumm vor ihm; aber als beide jetzt das Glas an ihre Lippen hoben, sah ich, wie ihre Augen ineinander gingen. – Ich sah das alles wie ein Bild, als sei es hundert Meilen von mir; dann aber plötzlich überfiel es mich, daß jenes schöne Weib dort mir gehöre, daß sie mein Weib sei; und dann trat ich zu ihnen und zwang sie, mit mir nach Hause zu gehen. (III: 27f.)

Here, we can see that Carsten's desire to protect his son and the articulation of that protection through a discourse of surveillance finds parallels in the text's historical setting, in the structural opposition that seems to be created between external aggression and domestic safety—the lustful, sinful, looks of desire recalling the predatory gazes in *Aquis submersus*.

However, as in *Aquis submersus*, what we note here is that looking is a basic human action and a form of communication, that what the text is more concerned to do is to differentiate between forms of observation, to represent a spectrum of human behaviour: indeed, the tragedy is prepared precisely by the compulsion, the need, and the desire to see and the power that human connection through vision has. As Carsten recalls to his sister, even after that evening of humiliation, the sight of his beautiful wife intoxicated him all the more: "Aber es war nicht die Schönheit, die unser Herrgott ihr gegeben hatte, es war die böse Lust, die sie so schön machte, die noch in ihren Augen spielte" (III: 28).

The text thus articulates man's concern to find "security" at a range of levels: political, historical, and military; moral and social; personal, familial, and emotional; and in a broader sense "natural": security from the natural world, the sea, and security from inheritance and genes. Carsten is seeking a safe haven, a "sicheren Hafen" for Heinrich, both metaphorically and in a sense literally, as he wishes him to be close by in Husum. In this vision of the world, dangers, moral and physical, come from outside.

It is, however, important to bear in mind that these structural oppositions that surveillance informs and within which the discourse of surveillance is to be read are either problematized by the details of the text or emerge primarily as the product of Carsten's own fears and feelings of guilt. For, while in *Aquis submersus* Johannes does not "see" differently from other characters, in *Carsten Curator*, Carsten's own psychology does inform the later narrative's symbolic forms and structures. After all, the harbour town may be a place of relative safety, but it is also exposed to the water and is still flooded regularly. And, there is still scope for heartless speculative capitalism in the small town, as the "Stadtunheilsträger" symbolises with watchword: "Des einen Tod, des andern Brot" (III: 45).

In a similar vein, while the text appears to present observation and surveillance in an essentially positive light, both the gossip of the town (II: 31) and Carsten's sense of reputation (III: 66) create a sense of oppression in this place of security. The oppression that reputation creates is most obviously evident in the picture in Carsten's room (III: 21). Described in detail, the portrait depicts Carsten's family, his father and mother, and is placed where he can see it from his desk. Indeed, Carsten turns to this picture again and again as a moral compass: "[es] fehlte nicht an einem ziemlich stattlichen Ahnenbilde, in dessen Anschauung der kleinbürgerliche Mann, wenn auch nicht in der französischen Formulierung 'Noblesse oblige', in schweren Stunden sein wankendes Gemüt zu stärken pflegte" (III: 20). The picture not only serves as a portal through which Carsten, who is a brooding and obsessive character, can dwell on the past; as the above quotation makes clear, looking at the painting (*Anschauung*) serves for Carsten as a way of engaging with his sense of social duty ("Noblesse oblige"). Carsten, through this painting, which depicts his father, and in his constant perception of his wife's features in his son, is haunted by absent observers he has internalised, whose surveillance he both fears and craves.

As with *Aquis submersus*, thus, "surveillance," the various strategies of and compulsions to watch and to watch over other human beings emerges as a highly problematical enterprise, for it limits the freedom of both observer and observed and ultimately ends in failure. Franz Stuckert's interpretation of *Aquis submersus* could easily be applied to *Carsten Curator*:

> Alles Leben, das sich in Erfüllung seiner individuellen Existenz kraftvoll verwirklichen will, muß notwendig schuldig werden, sowohl im sittlichen wie im metaphysischen Sinne; das ist die schmerzlich gewonnene Anschauung Storms. Sie schließt zugleich die Meinung ein, daß der Mensch das Recht habe, sein Ich zu verwirklichen, daß er dann aber bereit sein müsse, die Folgen seines Handelns – ob schuldig oder unschuldig, ist dabei gleichgültig – auf sich zu nehmen. (Stuckert 333)

For Carsten is not *really* a trustee. The text puts us right here in the first sentence: "eigentlich hieß er Carsten Carstens" (III: 1). Really, he is the owner of a wool shop and has left that in the hands of his sister. In part, the catastrophe is

the result of Carsten's sense of public reputation, which is the result of the development of his own personal identity, combined with an almost obsessive sense of family duty founded in his own guilt. *Carsten Curator* thus turns on the relationship between surveillance and individual freedom, but here it is the surveillant's duty to provide guardianship and his own right to a private, self-determined life that are in conflict. There is a tyranny of surveillance in *Carsten Curator*, but it is internal and psychological.

IV.

Both *Aquis submersus* and *Carsten Curator* can productively be read as explorations of surveillance. In both narratives, surveillance, the watching and monitoring of others, emerges as a characteristic human activity and an expression of human relations. For this reason, Storm's literary surveillances are broad and varied in scope; surveillance is represented and considered within a spectrum of human visual activity and human imagination: it informs man's imagined topography; it draws on man's visual communication with others; it exists within a metaphysical framework in which individuals imagine themselves to be observed by others, whether God or lost relatives.

From the point of view of literary scholarship, surveillance as a theme allows us to think about the relationships between different areas of current research and how they fit together in productive ways: first, the considerable interest that has been shown in visuality, usually with regard to placing Realism in a history of perception or with reference to technologies, such as photography (Ort, Hoffmann); second, the relationship in Realism between near and far, or "Heimat" and "Welt," which, while of longstanding interest, has been given renewed impetus by recent publications, such as a collection by Berbig and Göttsche, or indeed on the relationship between space in the text and perception more broadly. Finally, thinking about surveillance is relevant to discussions about Realism in a broader sense. For, in examining surveillance, we find that our texts ask questions about the power of our environments over us and how we engage with those environments, about man as observer, about the power of art as documentation, and about the nature of perception and representation within human society.

We began our study by considering the appropriateness of "surveillance" as a focus in a reading of Storm. After all, surveillance, the monitoring of individuals and their actions, is a modern concern made acute by current political pressures and new technological developments. Certainly, there is the general argument to be made that Storm's art functions precisely by engaging with the ethical questions posed by an increasingly technologically advanced society, as Russell Berman argues (Berman, 445–46). In the narratives we have read by Storm, the kinds of issues surveillance raises are not brought about by new possibilities, or technologies, but are governed by the limitations of human sensory perception: surveillance implies topographical limits. And it is this sense of limitation that is, in the end, the most significant in these narratives. For surveillance

emerges in these narratives as more than a difficult area of human relations; it is a representative act of humanity and a modern expression of tragedy, of man's attempts to control and observe fate and life, to reach out beyond himself—his impotency in this endeavour, but his compulsion to try for those he loves.

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